Fisheries and Oceans Canada | Pêches et Océans Canada

ATLANTIC COD

Consultations on listing under the *Species at Risk Act*

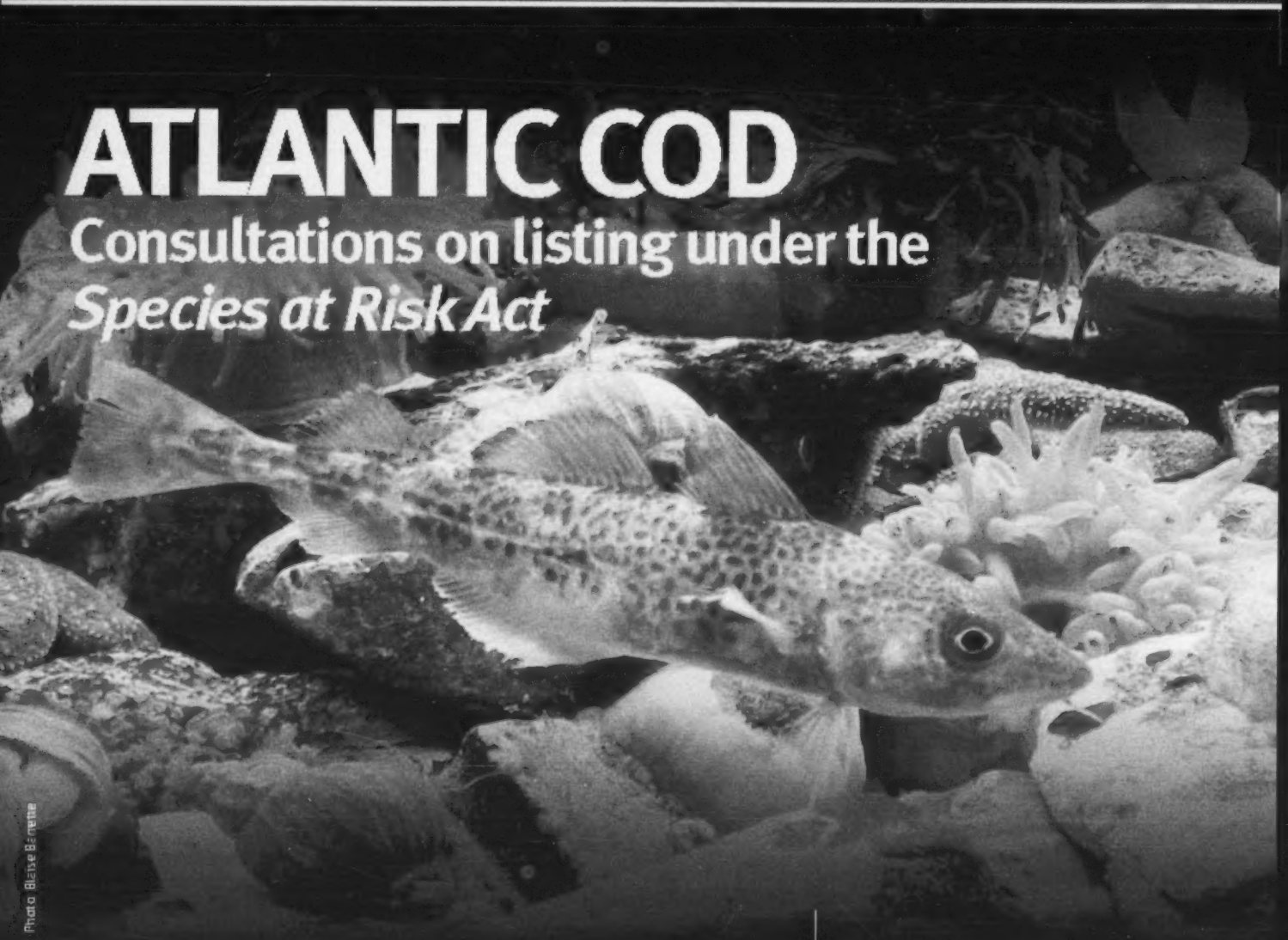


Photo: Blaise Bernatchez

Information summary and questionnaire for consultations on adding four Atlantic Cod populations to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk

November 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014

Populations:

- Laurentian North
- Laurentian South
- Southern
- Newfoundland and Labrador

We would like to receive your comments on the potential impacts of adding four populations of Atlantic Cod to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk.

Your comments are important.

Please fill out the questionnaire: we want to hear from you.

Canada

CONSULTATIONS
Let your opinion be heard

The *Species at Risk Act* acknowledges that all Canadians have a role to play in preventing the disappearance of wildlife species.

Before deciding whether any of these Atlantic Cod populations will be added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, we would like your opinion, comments and suggestions regarding the possible ecological, cultural and economic impacts of listing or not listing these populations under the *Species at Risk Act*.

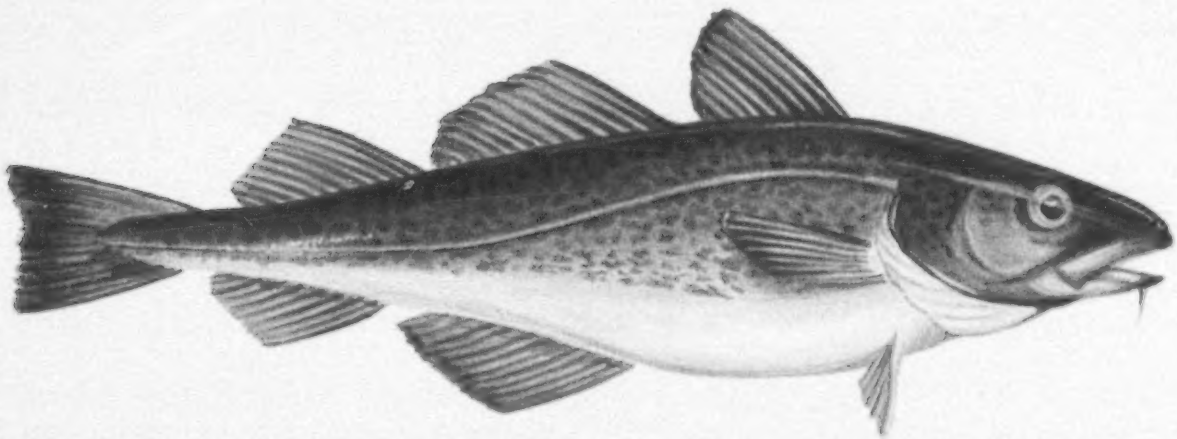
CONSULTATION
on four Atlantic Cod populations

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada divided Atlantic Cod in the Northwest Atlantic into four populations based on its guidelines. It was determined that these populations were distinct from one another due to differences in their genetics, ecology and life cycle.

FACTS
on Atlantic Cod

Atlantic Cod has been fished for more than 500 years in Canadian waters and it has been an economic and dietary mainstay for many Atlantic Canadian communities. It is a groundfish which feeds on a wide variety of fish and shellfish, including capelin, herring, flounder, mussels and crab. Atlantic Cod was once one of the dominant species in the Northwest Atlantic.

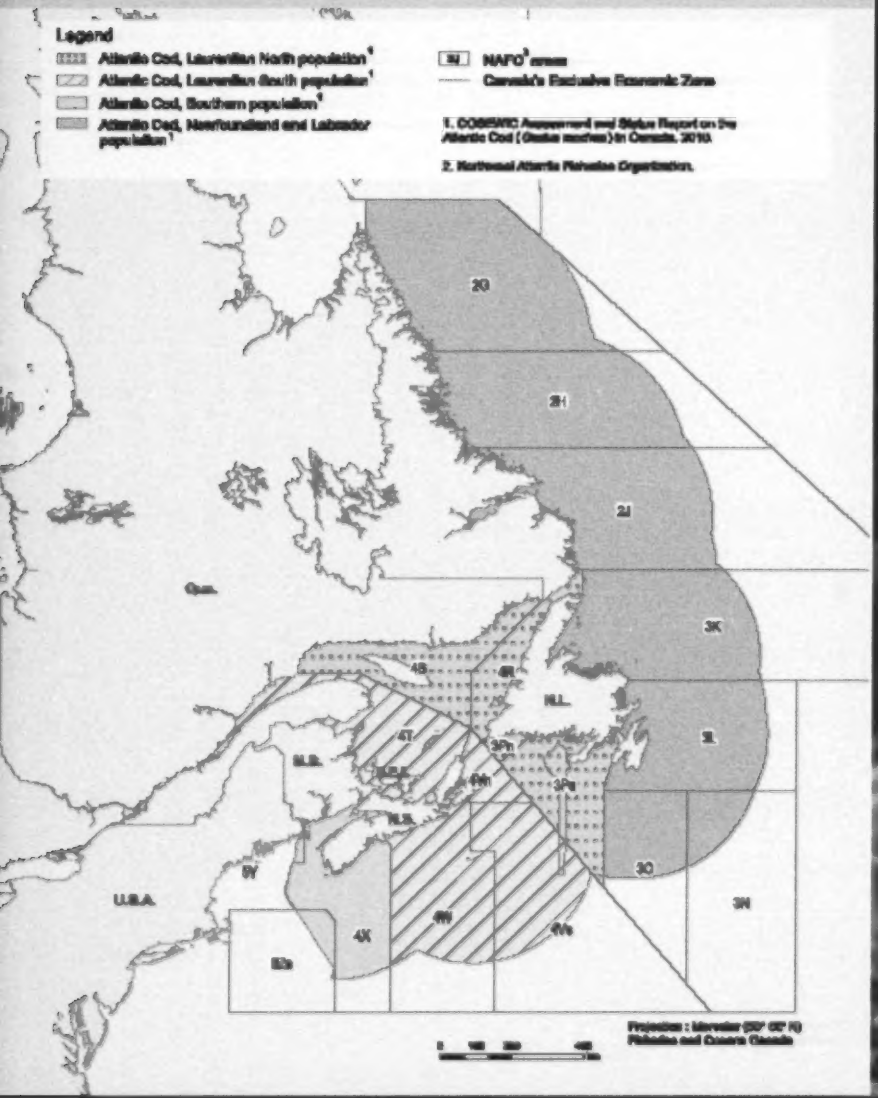
Water temperature is an important factor influencing the growth rates of Atlantic Cod. For example, cod in the Bay of Fundy growing in relatively warmer water can reach sexual maturity between 2 and 3 years of age, whereas cod in Newfoundland and Labrador will take 5 to 7 years to become mature.



POPULATION (NAFO AREAS)	COSEWIC STATUS	DECLINE IN ADULT ABUNDANCE OVER THE PAST THREE GENERATIONS (# OF YEARS)
Laurentian North (4RS3Pn3Ps)	**Endangered**	76-89% (30 years)
Laurentian South (4TVW)	**Endangered**	90% (27 years)
Southern (4X5YZ - Caraciar portion)	**Endangered**	64% (22.5 years)
Newfoundland and Labrador (2GH3KLNO)	**Endangered**	97-99% (33 years)

Map of Atlantic Cod populations (designatable units) under consultation

(by Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization [NAFO] areas)



Why are these **POPULATIONS** of Atlantic Cod at risk?

Using the best available information, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada has determined that:

- Fishing, directed and bycatch, has historically been one of the primary threats to Atlantic Cod, and remains one of the primary threats for the Laurentian North, Southern, and Newfoundland and Labrador populations of Atlantic Cod.
- In some areas, particularly south of the Laurentian Channel, elevated natural mortality is considered to be a significant threat.
- Alteration of the bottom habitat by fishing gear represents a potential but unevaluated threat.

Adding a population to the **LIST OF WILDLIFE SPECIES AT RISK**

The process of listing a species under the *Species at Risk Act* consists of several steps. It begins with an assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and ends with a government of Canada decision whether or not to add a species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk. Consultations are conducted to gather the views of Canadians and are an important step in this process.

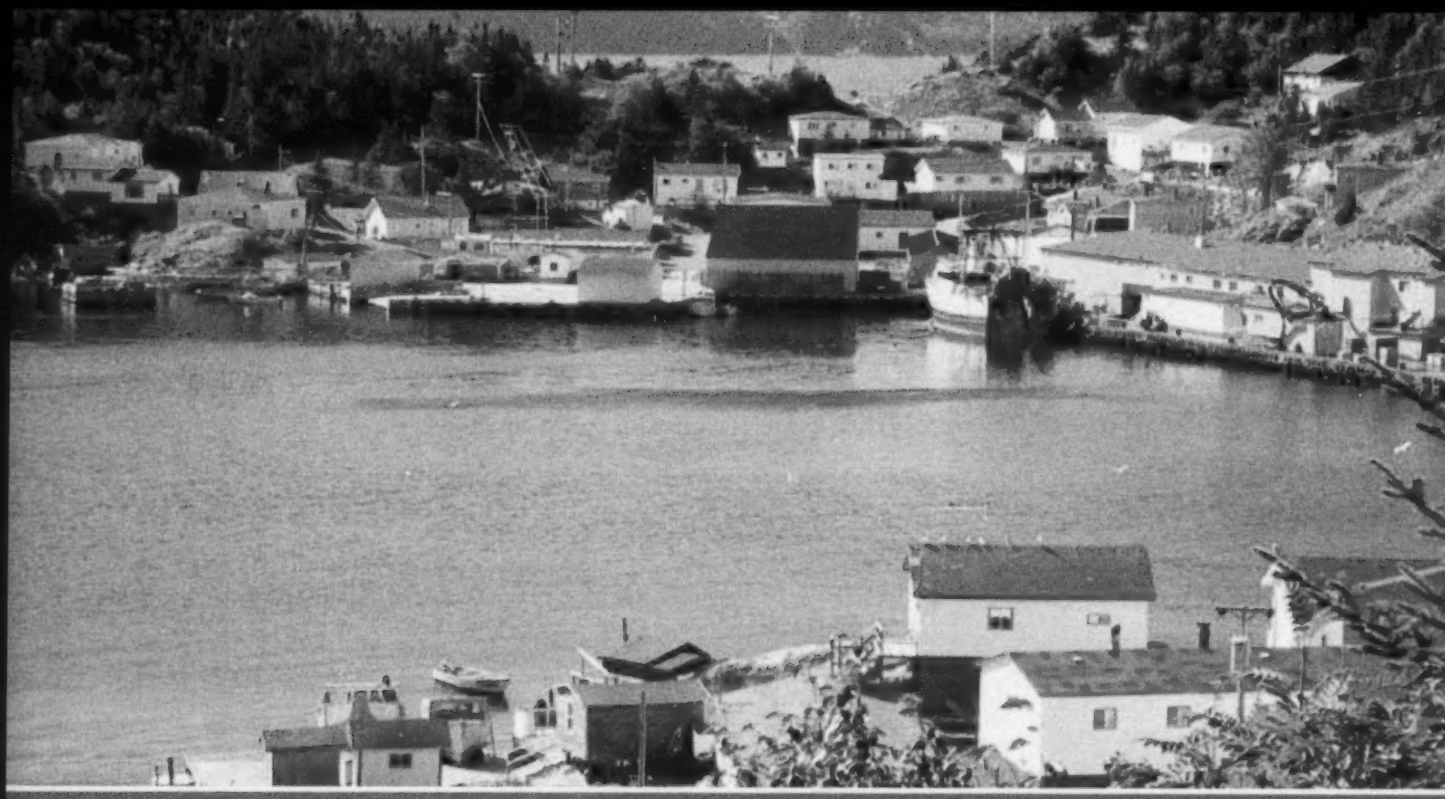
Who assigned an endangered status to these populations of Atlantic Cod?

COSEWIC is an independent committee of experts that assesses and designates which wildlife species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada. The status of several Atlantic Cod populations in Canada was assessed in 2010. This assessment was based on the best available information, including scientific data, community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge, where available.

If a population is listed...

A recovery strategy will be developed to identify threats and measures to be implemented to address these threats. Automatic prohibitions will also apply. It will be illegal to kill, harm, harass, take, possess, capture, buy, sell or trade Atlantic Cod from these populations. Critical habitat - the habitat necessary for the survival and recovery of Atlantic Cod - will be protected.

For a copy of the COSEWIC Atlantic Cod Assessment and Status Report or other information, visit the **Species at Risk Public Registry:**
www.sararegistry.gc.ca



ANSWERS TO A FEW of your questions

Why list these Atlantic Cod populations?

According to the COSEWIC assessment, the abundance of these four Atlantic Cod populations has declined significantly and they are now considered endangered. The prohibitions that would be implemented under the *Species at Risk Act* would offer added protection for these populations. Listing would also initiate recovery planning with key partners.

Would the directed commercial Atlantic Cod fishery continue if these populations were listed?

If these populations of Atlantic Cod were added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, the directed Atlantic Cod commercial fishery of these populations would be prohibited.

What would happen if I captured Atlantic Cod while fishing other groundfish species?

Bycatch or retention may be allowed under certain conditions (e.g. any bycatch of Atlantic Cod may need to be released back into the water in the best possible condition). However, it would be prohibited to buy, sell or trade Atlantic Cod from these populations.

Would I be able to continue recreational fishing of Atlantic Cod if it was listed?

If these populations of Atlantic Cod were added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, recreational fishing would likely be prohibited.

Would my Aboriginal community be able to continue to fish Atlantic Cod for food, social and ceremonial purposes if it was listed?

Under certain conditions, Aboriginal fisheries for food, social and ceremonial purposes may continue.

Questionnaire

You can make a difference: your comments are important!

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain your comments on adding four Atlantic Cod populations to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk. You may use one questionnaire for all populations or fill out one questionnaire per population.

For more information, go to www.sararegistry.gc.ca.

Please choose the populations you are commenting on:

- ☐ Laurentian North Population
- ☐ Laurentian South Population
- ☐ Southern Population
- ☐ Newfoundland and Labrador Population

1. Do you support adding one or several Atlantic Cod populations as endangered to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk? Why?

2. What would be the **positive impacts** of listing one or several Atlantic Cod populations on your activities, the community, the environment, the culture and economy?

3. What would be the **negative impacts** of listing one or several Atlantic Cod populations on your activities, the community, the environment, the culture and economy?

4. Do you have any other comments on the listing of one or several populations of Atlantic Cod as endangered?

5. If you are answering on behalf of an Aboriginal community or organization, an industry, a small business[1], an association or organization, please specify which one.

6. In what province or territory do you live? In what province or territory does your organization operate?

Select a province

Your name and contact information (optional):

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.

To send this questionnaire, click on Submit or save the completed form and send it by email to SARA_LEP@xfo-mpo.gc.ca. You may also print this questionnaire (if necessary, add extra pages) and send it to:

Submit

Director
Species at Risk Program Management
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
200 Kent St.
Ottawa, ON
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1- Defined as any business, including its affiliates, that has fewer than 100 employees or between $30,000 and $5 million in annual gross revenues.